

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3819

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y F O R M R N 3792 V I C E 7392

E..O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:

SUBJECT: JOBERT VISIT TO ITALY: FRANCO-SOVIET RELATIONS

1. ACCORDING FONOFF SECRETARY GENERAL GAJA WHO WAS PRESENT, PORTION OF RECENT DISCUSSIONS (MARCH 14-16) IN ITALY BETWEEN JOBERT AND MORO WERE DEVOTED TO COMPARISON OF NOTES ON LATEST POMPIDOU/JOBERT VISIT TO USSR AND GROMYKO VISIT TO ROME. GAJA SAID JOBERT SET THE STAGE BY DESCRIBING FRENCH POLICY TOWARD USSR AS IMPORTANT BUT NOT ALL-CONSUMING. JOBERT SAID THAT FRENCH ASSIGNED SOVIET'S WEIGHT OF ABOUT 10 PERCENT IN THEIR OVERALL FOREIGN RELATIONS AND ADDED THAT MOSCOW BY NO MEANS CONSTITUTED CORNERSTONE OF FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY. AS A CONSEQUENCE, FRENCH FELT THEY COULD BE TOUGH WITH SOVIETS AS THEY HAD BEEN RECENTLY.

2. TURNING TO POMPIDOU'S TALKS WITH BREZHNEV IN PITSUNDA, JOBERT SAID THAT POMPIDOU VISIT HAD BEEN POSTPONED TWICE BEFORE IT FINALLY CAME TO PASS. THE FIRST POSTPONEMENT WAS CAUSED BY SIGNATURE OF US-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR. VISIT WAS PUT OFF SECOND TIME AT SOVIET INSISTENCE FOLLOW-
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ING A NOT SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED TOUGH SPEECH BY JOBERT LAST FALL.

MOST INTERESTING POINT TO EMERGE FROM JOBERT/MORO EXCHANGES ON USSR,
ACCORDING TO GAJA, WAS FRENCH IMPRESSION THAT THERE IS DISTINCT
LINK IN SOVIET EYES BETWEEN PROGRESS IN SALT TALKS AND MIDDLE EAST
SITUATION. EXACT NATURE OF LINK WAS NOT MADE CLEAR ALTHOUGH GAJA
UNDERSTOOD THAT FRENCH BELIEVE SOVIETS INTEND TO SHORE UP THEIR
POSITION IN MIDDLE EAST IN ORDER INTER ALIA TO BE IN POSITION TO
EXERT GREATER FORCE IN SALT. VOLPE

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